





# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to Costa Rica! A long the past two years our Chamber is been working hard in the promotion of our country as a friendly destination for LGBTIQ people by preparing the touristic product awareness every property one by one. This work is very important to do before we receive the LGBTIQ tourist. More and more companies, hotels and tour operators are becoming LGBTIQ friendly by understanding the needs of our community internationally. As a chamber is our duty to defend the human rights of every visitor that decide kindly to visit Costa Rica, therefore our aim is to provide with knowledge to all our affiliates about the LGBTIQ people, so that they learn how to approach and how to meet and greet everyone.

Our chamber teamed up in the last year with several institutions and organizations in Costa Rica such as United Nations, ACNUR, ACOPROT, Wellness Costa Rica Association, PANIAMOR Foundation, among others like hotel chains, travel agencies, tour operators, DMC's airlines in order to guarantee that every LGBTIQ person will not be discriminate under any circumstances. The effort was made as part of our commitment with the sustainable development goals with the main goal is to eradicated poverty, discrimination, gender equality, inequality among others. Also as part of our affirmative actions with the society, our chamber has signed The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Adolescents from Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Business and Tourism, with the commitment to prevent sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in all our destinations within the country. The Code of Conduct is an initiative of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) joining the tourism private sector and the children's rights non-governmental organization ECPAT, aiming to prevent sexual exploitation of children at tourism destinations. In Costa Rica, The Code of Conduct is a project of the tourist industry that is supported by Paniamor Foundation together with the Costarican Tourism Board.

From our Board of directors and our members we want to welcome you to Costa Rica, we want you to #TRAVEL, #ENJOY, #RESPECT. See and explore our destinations, enjoy all the experiences in contact with nature, enjoy our people, our culture, our gastronomy, learn from us and let us learn the good things from you, share your culture. We all are part of the Diversity!



















# WE ARE COSTA RICA

Costa Rica has proven to be a concentrated nation, distinguished by the value of what we create: innovation, sustainability and competitiveness set us apart.

Costa Rica is a country located in Central America that is ranked as one of the most visited international destinations. One of Costa Rica's main sources of income is tourism, therefore education, infrastructure, security and customer service are very important factors that we take seriously. Costa Rica is a democratic and peaceful country and it has not had an army since the year 1949.

Although the country is small and it covers only 0.03 percent of the surface of the globe, it proudly shelters 5 percent of the existing biodiversity in the entire world. Twenty-six percent of the country is composed of conservation and natural protected territory.

Costa Rica is also an attractive country for investment and offers great potential for the establishment of important multinational companies, thanks to the outstanding academic level of its population, as well as the high standard of modern services and social and political stability.













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# WHAT SET US APART IN THE REGION:





#### **HUMAN RIGHTS**

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is not specifically prohibited by the constitution of Costa Rica. As a result, in 1998 the Supreme Court (Sala IV) clarified gay rights by extending full civil protection to gays and lesbians. In that same year, the Assembly passed Article 48, General Law 7771 making anyone who discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation subject to a fine or jail term of up to two months.

Two years ago, the Vice President of Costa Rica Ana Helena Chacon led a consultation process with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, based in Costa Rica, to clarify whether Costa Rican legislation related to sexual orientation and gender identity is aligned with the American Convention on human rights which the country is part of, this first consultation aims to determine if the procedure established for the name change according to sexual identity, respects the convention. The court unanimously resolved that states must ensure that people interested in rectifying the gender annotation or, if applicable, mentions of sex, change their name, adapt their image in the registers and in the identity documents of conformity with your gender identity.

The second resolution, due to a consultation by the government of Luis Guillermo Solís, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (Inter-American Court of Human Rights) ordered Costa Rica to guarantee to same-sex couples all existing rights in the legislation, including the right to marriage, without any discrimination.

The order extends to the 20 states in Latin America that recognize the contentious jurisdiction of the Court.

Unanimously, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled: "The State must recognize and guarantee all rights deriving from a family bond between persons of the same sex, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 11.2 and 17.1 of the American Convention on Human Rights and in the terms established in paragraphs 200 to 218."

# 2020 THE YEAR OF THE HONEY MOON

More than a year after a controversial decision of the Interamerican Court of Human Rights, the date for the legalization of equal marriage in Costa Rica has already been set: May 26th, 2020.

Marriage between same-sex couples will then take over, after an hard road begining January 2018, which will make Costa Rica the first Central American country to legalize the union between LGBTIQ people.

On January 9th, 2018, Costa Rica was notified by the Court of its response to a request for an advisory opinion made in May 2016 by the Costa Rican authorities. The request was related to the rights of same-sex couples about the best way to guarantee changes in gender identity on the part of the Costa Rican State.

This sparked a general controversy that affected the national elections of 2018, and defined the triumph of the current President of Costa Rica, Carlos Alvarado, aligned in favor of LGBTIQ rights and the advisory opinion of the international Court.

On August 8th 2018, the Costa Rica's Constitutional Chamber declared the unconstitutionality actions filed against the Family Code that prevented same-sex marriage filed by LGBTIQ activists and couples.

After weeks of discussion, on November 26th 2018 the magistrates endorsed the unions, with a term of 18 months for the entry into force of the decision. In the sentence, the magistrates declared unconstitutional articles that prevent the marriage and the de facto union between people of the same sex, but left the norms in force for 18 months for the Congress to legislate on the matter. If within that period (May 26th, 2020) the Congress does not approve any law that enables equal marriage, the two norms will be automatically repealed.









At least five laws of the country must be reformed for the entry into force of equal marriage: Labor Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Law on the Penalization of Violence against Women, among others, must be reviewed to guarantee equality.

In recent years, Costa Rica has made progress in the rights of the LGBTI population as, for example, last May the Supreme Electoral Tribunal amended a regulation to allow name change by self-perceived gender identity and eliminate the indication of the sex of birth on ID cards.

Other advances in recent years include changes in regulations to guarantee same-sex couples family social insurance, the pension for death and hospital visits for partners.

The process of change towards equal marriage has already begun, and this very year the first wedding fair dedicated to the community, Boda Pride LGTBI 2019, took place, supported by the Costa Rica Diverse Chamber of Commerce.

The economic potential that this represents for companies and entrepreneurs in Costa Rica is enormous, if we consider the data from the study Consumption With Pride, which indicates that the LGBTIQ population far exceeds heterosexuals in terms of e-commerce or electronic commerce. The document showed that 63% compared to 55%, the LGBTIQ community consumes more, a difference coming from people, mostly young homosexuals.

#### **GAY TRAVEL IN COSTA RICA**

Costa Rica is probably the most gay-popular tourist destination in Central America, with San José and Quepos being the most popular destinations for the LGBTI community. There is a vibrant gay nightlife in San José consisting of discos, bars, nightclubs, and cafés.

There are several hotels that advertise themselves as gay-friendly or gay-owned. Some gay-friendly travel agencies create trips especially for gay travelers that highlight these hotels.









The Pacific coast town of Quepos (Manuel Antonio National Park) is one of several beach destinations with gay-owned or gay-friendly hotels and businesses. The Fortuna area (Arenal Volcano) is becoming increasingly known as a gay-friendly destination





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# THE CODE OF CONDUCT THAT SAFEGUARDS THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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"In Costa Rica, the Code of Conduct is a project of the tourist industry that is supported by the Costa Rican Institute of Tourism (ICT) and the Paniamor Foundation"

#### For more information:

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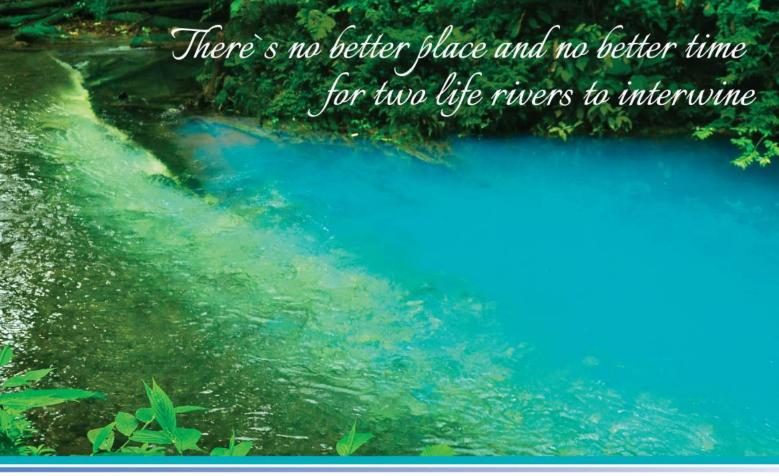
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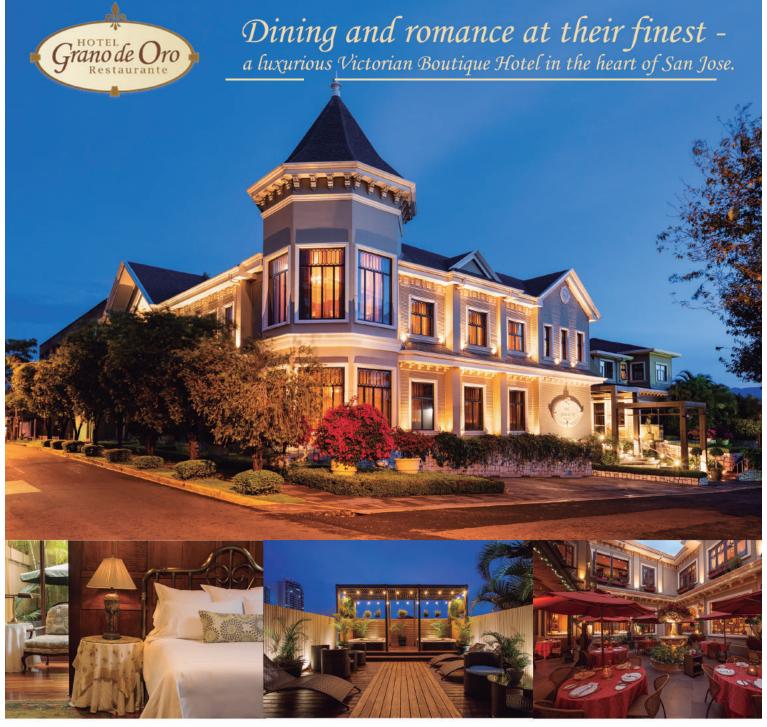






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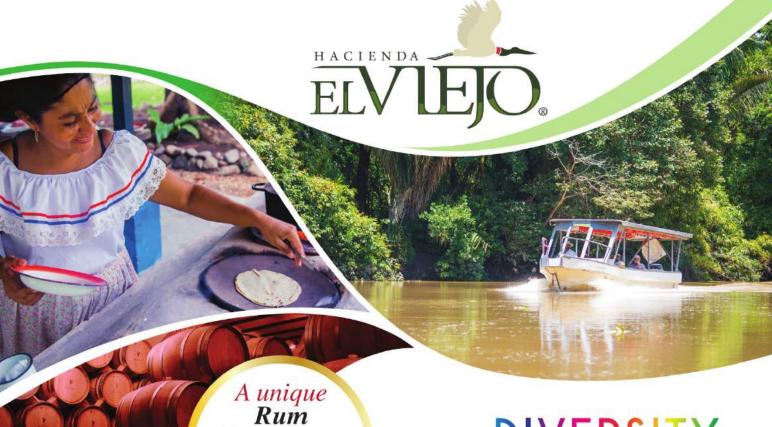
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# MANAGING DIVERSITY, A KEY MOVEMENT FOR COMPANIES

According to several sources, homophobia is expensive: it costs society around \$ 100 billion annually. How to avoid the cost of such discrimination?

Managing diversity is a corporate commitment that must be undertaken with great responsibility if we want to maintain sustainable growth in the new socioeconomic order, to be more attractive as a company, retain human talent, generate customer loyalty and empathy with potential buyers and sellers.

The Seal of Diversity Management is a licensing process created by the Costa Rica Diverse Chamber of Commerce to recognize efforts in the development of inclusive commercial and social relations, and boost microeconomics with respect for diversity and human rights.

The Chamber have developed this diversity management program to measure a process that guides corporate, commercial and tourist companies, and provides multiple benefits to the organization, its employees and clients.

With the Seal we seek to create a safe and inclusive environment for all people, through the commitment of companies to provide security and tranquility to various populations, including employees of a company, as well as tourists visiting Costa Rica

The Seal is aimed to build a large network of inclusive providers, increasing productivity through inclusion, and collaborating with the Responsible Competitiveness Index.

The basic principles of the Seal are inclusiveness, non-discrimination and economic empowerment, and are based on globally recognized indices by the Yogyakarta Principles, UN Sustainable Development Goals and the work of US based Human Rights Campaign (HRC).

The impact network we hope to generate includes not only the organizations that participate but also suppliers, customers, local communities and the government itself.

"With the Seal we want to provoke a social change that feels. From the generation of reflection processes in the personnel of a company, to establishing the Seal as part of the added value for a company to be a supplier of the government, the Chamber seeks to transform the society in which we live, "said Julio César Calvo, President of the CCDCR.







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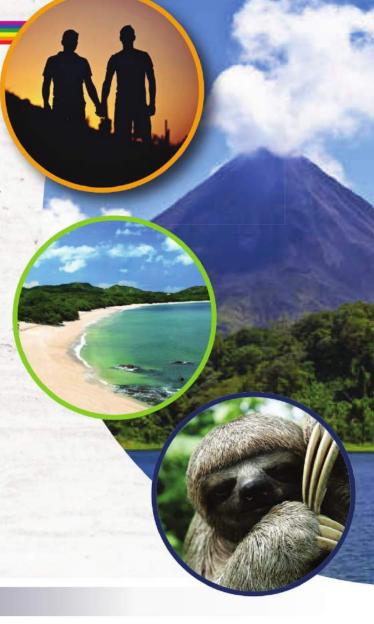
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- 5. There are many dentists in Costa Rica that speak English, communication and clarity with what you need won't be a problem.
- Dentists in Costa Rica undergo at least 5 years of college and a large number travel to other countries after graduation to get training in different specialties from universities like Boston and Harvard.
- 7. Clinics like Dental Pluss offer state of the art technology that will guarantee a better and more comfortable service.
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